



State of Connecticut

## **DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES**

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**Testimony of Renee Cimino  
Assistant Public Defender  
Office of Chief Public Defender  
Raised Bill No. 6576 - An Act Concerning Larceny  
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing  
March 16, 2009**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports Raised Bill No. 6576, An Act Concerning Larceny, which is an agency proposal. The proposed legislation if enacted, adjusts the monetary values utilized in the larceny statutes to amounts that more accurately reflect current dollar values.

The larceny statutes establish six degrees of larceny depending upon the value of the property or service taken. Larceny first, second and third degree are classified as felonies, while larceny fourth, fifth and sixth as misdemeanors. The degree of the felony or misdemeanor is further based upon the value of the property or service taken. The general proposition being the greater the value taken, the more serious the crime, and hence the more serious the penalty.

The monetary values associated with the larceny statutes have not been updated in the past 27 years. This proposed legislation uses the United States Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index calculator to convert the 1982 monetary values to present day values by factoring in inflation. Application of this calculator to the existing amounts notes that these values have more than doubled since 1982.

The Office of Chief Public Defender believes this proposed legislation will have a significant impact on its indigent clients. A criminal statute that accurately reflects the current real dollar values prevents individuals from being charged with felonies based upon artificially low larceny values. A felony charge can, among other things, result in a higher bond being set at arraignment, an increased likelihood of incarceration as part of any disposition and/or, for 16 and 17 year olds, a possibility of being prosecuted as an "Adult" versus a "Youthful Offender".

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Testimony of Renee Cimino, Assistant Public Defender, Office of Chief Public Defender

Re: Raised Bill No. 6576 - An Act Concerning Larceny

Lastly, most larceny plea agreements include restitution as a condition of the disposition. A felony conviction can prevent clients from obtaining employment to satisfy their restitution orders and can hinder their ability to financially support their families. Felony convictions also have ancillary impacts ranging from housing implications to federal immigration consequences.

Connecticut's larceny statutes are structured so that the charges and penalties increase upon the value of the property or service taken. It is prudent that those values are properly indexed to insure that the punishment more accurately fits the crime. In conclusion, the Office of Chief Public Defender requests this Committee support Raised Bill No. 6576, An Act Concerning Larceny.